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11 May 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: DD/PERS/P&C

FROM : CH/ADRS

SUBJECT : OFFICE OF PERSONNEL SURVEY

1. Comments on Recommendations under Computer Program Development

- a. Recommendation No. 3. We strongly concur in this recommendation. The number of OJCS personnel "assigned" to PERSIGN II as reported at MAP meetings is an illusionary figure -- the personnel never quite materialize. This accounts for the "considerable confusion about how many analysts are actually working on the program" mentioned in paragraph 26. As an example, at this time OJCS has no one actually working on the development of PERSIGN II. Those supposedly "working" have spent the past three months in preparing for MAP meetings, drafting MBO and PERT charts, briefing office managers who are waiting on the sidelines for PERSIGN II and their own manning tables on the great Personnel system to-be, maintaining PERSIGN I, the RCA 501 staff and PERCON systems and enlarging the data base to permit interface of PERSIGN I with CENBAD and CENCO. There is no question that many of these things have to be done but they do not contribute to the development of PERSIGN II.

The physical work space of the OP analysts in [] is more than adequate for two members of the staff but for the other two (an additional member has been added since the report) it is not conducive to the concentration that is required for design of specifications. It should be noted that some OJCS analysts suffer the same inadequacies. Now that space is available, it is anticipated that the badly needed clerical support will be supplied.

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- b. Recommendation No. 4. This is a valid recommendation. Priorities, emphases and regulations have changed over the many years this project has been on the books. Basically, the elements in PERSIGN II are those appearing on the Notification of Personnel Action which conform with Civil Service standards and Payroll system requirements plus a certain amount of Fitness Report and overseas service data for CIARDS. Some items peculiar to the Agency were added, such as PRA, development complement and subcategory data but these are necessary to service reporting requirements levied on the Director of Personnel by Agency regulation to support heads of Career Services or operating components. Questionnaires were sent to all users of reports several years ago requesting suggestions for changes and additions. Some of the suggested additions were included in the design of PERSIGN II but most were rejected as being too specialized or inapplicable to the Agency as a whole, for example, health problems of wife or children, projected rotational assignments or training, special work related skills, etc. It has always been envisioned that PERSIGN II would provide the basic personnel data for subsidiary systems which could be tailored to meet individual Office and Career Service specialized requirements.

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- c. Recommendation No. 5. We concur. There is a mutual understanding that OJCS will not undertake personnel-related projects without the approval of the Director of Personnel but this point should be re-emphasized because pressure is building up again for individual manning tables for all of the offices in the DDO.

2. General Comments on Computer Program Development.

- a. Paragraph 20. "It was a very ambitious undertaking..." This is correct in that the DDA directorate was very compartmentalized then and most of the early efforts were spent in convincing the various offices that they had a vested interest in solving an Agency problem instead of a particular office problem. What wasn't realized then was that OCS, as it was then known, didn't have the "know-how" to provide the technology required because most of the staff had come up through the EAM school without proper retraining.
- b. Paragraph 21. It is not entirely correct to say that the systems being built "in step-by-step fashion" "would still weave together." Because they were built without benefit of someone who knew the total management or design concept some of the originally conceived systems are incapable of interfacing with others. For example, the OMS systems can never report on the number of handicapped applicants or employees of the Agency because their system has no record of who is an applicant or employee and cannot interface with a system that can furnish this information.
- c. Paragraph 23. PERSIGN II and GAP won't be "the millenium for personnel management." The system will only provide information on what has happened. It will require first-rate programmers and sophisticated planners to interpret the data or to build models to use the data in such a way that meaningful projections can be produced.

Errors in PERSIGN I are not because the "computer has been unable to handle the workload" but because of soft-ware problems, i.e., lack of programmers who could program for the RCA or unavailability of proper documentation as to how programs written years ago work.

It is not so much the "speed" of the computer that will solve the error problem as it is the built-in validity checks on data by use of dictionaries and interfaces with other systems such as STAFFING.

- d. Paragraphs 24 and 27. That there are "disconcerting danger signals" is an astute observation and stems in great part from the conflicting priorities. It is anticipated that the MAP Review Committee can help OJCS solve some of the priority problems.